

Age-Friendly New Jersey Advisory Council: February 7, 2023

Topic: LGBTQ, Alzheimer's Disease, and Older Adults with Disabilities

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Janet Sharma's Meeting notes

The February 7 meeting featured three outstanding presentations. Here are my key takeaways from each presentation.

Hudson Pride – David Rosen: [View Slides Here](#)

- Don't use the term "Queer" for people over 45 unless they say it's okay, as that term may have negative connotations from prior experiences.
- Seniors grew up at a time when LGBTQ was not accepted. This has profound impact on their trust in the system.
- When they come into care services, their fears of institutional bias are magnified. In nursing homes, the non-LGBTQ older adults are the same ones who ostracized them, made laws against them, ignored AIDS, etc.
- Many LGBTQ+ do not have natural caregivers – friends (died of AIDS), family (parents are dead, they have no children). But that's changing, as more and more LGBTQ+ age, they will age with families.
- Home care concerns: Fear is they won't get equitable care if they remain "out" as they age; equitable treatment from care workers is inconsistent.

Alzheimer's Association - Cheryl Ricci-Francione: [View Slides Here](#)

- Alzheimer's is about 60-80% of all dementias.
- Dementia is an umbrella term for loss of memory and other thinking abilities.
- Alzheimer's is a continuum; someone can have it in their body for 20 years before symptoms appear.
- The #1 risk factor for Alzheimer's is age, but it can start as early as one's 40s.
- 6 million are living with Alzheimer's or dementia.
- We need to change public perception:
 - Eliminate stigma
 - Seek professional diagnosis (even though there is no cure) & clinical trials
 - Put together an action/care plan with family & support network
 - Build a safety net - **this is where age-friendly communities can have impact**

Disability Rights New Jersey - Mary Ciccone: [View Slides Here](#)

- Aging people with disabilities may have lost their primary caretaker(s), often their parents.
- Adults with disabilities become even more isolated as they age.
- Programs and group homes tend to primarily serve younger individuals.